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Viewing cable 06MANAGUA2606, RIZO TO A/S SHANNON: WE WILL REFORM THE PLC FROM

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Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
06MANAGUA2606	2006-11-30 20:07	2011-08-30 01:44	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Managua

Appears in these articles:

<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758456.aspx>
<http://www.nacion.com/2011-05-30/Mundo/NotasSecundarias/Mundo2758467.aspx>
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<http://www.confidencial.com.ni/articulo/3967/barreto-era-ldquo-fuente-confiable-rdquo-para-eeuu>

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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0832
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 002606

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DEPT FOR WHA A/S SHANNON, WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/11/2016
TAGS: [EAID](#) [ECON](#) [EFIN](#) [KDEM](#) [NU](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#)
SUBJECT: RIZO TO A/S SHANNON: WE WILL REFORM THE PLC FROM
WITHIN

Classified By: Ambassador Paul A. Trivelli. Reasons 1.4 (B,D).

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: On November 28, Assistant Secretary Thomas Shannon met with Jose Rizo and Jose Antonio Alvarado, former presidential and vice presidential candidates for the Liberal Constitutional Party (PLC). Voicing their discontent with the election process, Rizo and Alvarado insisted that they were "cheated out of the possibility of a second round." Rizo spoke about his desire to reform or "rescue the PLC" and remove Arnoldo Aleman from his leadership role in the party. He envisions a more democratic PLC that will be the "one liberal force" in Nicaragua. END SUMMARY.

WE WERE CHEATED
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¶2. (C) Jose Antonio Alvarado told A/S Shannon that according to his party's data, the PLC should have garnered enough points to take the election to a second round against Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) candidate Daniel Ortega. According to Alvarado, early election results collected by the PLC and the OAS indicated a close race between the PLC and the FSLN, but that the election (or the chance for a second round) "was stolen from the PLC" by a deal Arnoldo Aleman struck with the FSLN. Alvarado claims that Aleman conspired with Supreme Electoral Council (CSE) president Roberto Rivas to alter the results. (COMMENT: Although the PLC did garner more votes than some of the polls predicted, neither the CSE numbers nor the Etica y Transparencia quick count bear out Alvarado's claim. END COMMENT.)

REFORM FROM WITHIN
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¶3. (C) Rizo expressed to Shannon his goal to reform the party from within so that it can become the primary liberal opposition to the FSLN. He hopes to democratize the party and unite all the liberals under the PLC "umbrella." He stated that the political parties in Nicaragua resist modernization and advancement and that he will fight to "rescue the dignity of Nicaraguan liberalism."

¶4. (C) Echoing Rizo's comments, Alvarado emphasized that the best way to reform the party is from the inside. He added that he should never have left the party (he later returned) because change must be initiated from within the party. Alvarado claimed that the PLC is still powerful, as evidenced by its strong showing in the deputy races, and that the party wants to maintain a close relationship with the United States. Both Rizo and Alvarado asserted that abandoning the

PLC would not eliminate the problem of Aleman. They asserted that Aleman could hold at least 10% of the vote, and therefore could remain a "pebble in the shoe of liberalism." Rizo and Alvarado insisted that the "Aleman problem" could only be resolved within the party.

ALEMAN MUST GO

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¶5. (C) Envisioning a strong PLC without the influence of Aleman, Alvarado acknowledged that Aleman's role within the PLC has been divisive and he must be forced to abandon his role within the party by PLC members themselves. He noted that the PLC is starting to hold party leadership meetings in other locations (instead of at Aleman's El Chile residence).

¶6. (C) Rizo alleged that Aleman does not want him in the National Assembly and that he has conspired to rob him of that seat. However, Rizo will continue to fight for his spot, claiming he will take the case to the Supreme Court. (NOTE: Article 133 of the Nicaraguan constitution entitles the former vice president to serve as the former president's alternate in the National Assembly, and makes no mention that this right is forfeited if the vice president resigns, as in Rizo's case. END NOTE)

¶7. (C) Shannon emphasized the United State's commitment to democracy and development in Nicaragua and said that his meeting with Ortega was an opportunity to start a dialogue with the new government. Alvarado commented that Ortega's statements so far have been "measured" and attributed that posture to Rosario Murillo's influence. Alvarado added that he expects Ortega will maintain this approach over the next six months as the FSLN consolidates power, but later Ortega's stance will change. Whatever Ortega's future actions, both

Rizo and Alvarado said now was a good time to engage Ortega. They said, "Call his bluff now. It will make it costlier for him to walk away from you later."

¶8. (U) Participants:

Nicaragua:
Jose Rizo
Jose Antonio Alvarado

U.S.:
Assistant Secretary Tom Shannon
Ambassador Paul Trivelli
DCM Peter Brennan
Poloff Nicole Chulick (notetaker)

¶9. (U) This cable was cleared by A/S Shannon.
TRIVELLI